

MEMORANDUM

TO: Zoning Commission of the District of Columbia

FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review and Historic Preservation

DATE: November 18, 2013

SUBJECT: **Z.C. CASE NO. 10-32A** – Request filed by Goulston & Storrs, P.C. for a special exception for a campus plan amendment, further processing, and an area variance for the construction of the Northeast Triangle Residence Hall for Georgetown University, proposed by the President and Directors of Georgetown College at 3700 O Street, N.W.

APPLICATION

The applicant proposes:

1. Campus plan amendment to convert the use of three buildings from academic/administrative use to academic/administrative and residential/campus life/athletic use;
2. Further processing to renovate those three buildings for use as either residence halls or administrative use;
3. Campus plan amendment approval to permit a residence hall;
4. Further processing for the construction of that residence hall; and
5. Variance approval to reduce the setback from a lot line for institutional buildings over forty feet height.

A separate application, ZC10-32B, was filed by the applicant for a campus plan amendment to permit a building addition to the MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and further processing to permit the construction of that building addition. That application is scheduled to be heard by the Commission on December 2, 2013.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends **APPROVAL** of the application.

BACKGROUND

Zoning Commission Order No. 10-32 Georgetown University 2010-2017 Campus Plan became final on October 10, 2012, subject to forty-one conditions, including the following:

Term

1. *The Campus Plan as amended is approved for the period January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2017.*

Georgetown Community Partnership

6. *Also by Fall 2013, the 65 students living on the 1400 block of 36th Street will be moved to and accommodated in other on-campus housing. The move of these 65 students means that the University will continue to provide housing for 5,053 students, but will do so in locations that accommodate neighborhood concerns. In addition to moving these 65 students onto campus, by Fall 2015, the University will house an additional 385 students in new University housing. This means that by Fall 2015, 450 students once living on 36th Street or in other parts of the neighborhood will be housed by the University:*
 - a. *Any new residence hall constructed to meet the above commitment shall be located either on the Main Campus west of 37th Street or another location outside of Zip Code 20007, unless the University receives permission from the relevant civic organization (e.g., CAG, BCA, or FCCA, the relevant ANC (ANC 2E or ANC 3D), and this Commission; and*
 - b. *The University shall be permitted to convert existing portions of the Leavey Center to residential use as well as construct an addition to the Leavey Center to provide such housing. No additional further processing review of such housing shall be required, provided that the design is approved by the Commission of Fine Arts pursuant to the Old Georgetown Act.*
7. *The University shall require all Traditional Undergraduate Program (as defined in Condition 9) freshman, sophomore, and transfer students under the age of 21 to reside in University housing, except for study abroad students, commuters, veterans, married students, and students with medical conditions or disabilities, religious beliefs or other restrictions that are inconsistent with residence hall life.*

This is the first campus plan amendment and the first further processing application to the Georgetown University 2010-2017 Campus Plan.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The applicant requests special exception approval for campus plan amendments, further processing and a variance under the approved campus plan for:

1. Campus plan amendment to convert the use of the Gervase, Mulledy and Ryan buildings from academic/administrative use to academic/administrative and residential/campus life/ athletic use;
2. Campus plan amendment approval to permit the construction of the Northeast Residence Hall;
3. Further processing for the construction of the Northeast Residence Hall;
4. Further processing for the renovation of the Mulledy Building and Ryan Hall for residential use and for residential or residential and administrative use of Gervase Building; and
5. Variance approval to reduce the setback from a lot line of an institutional building over forty feet height.

The increase in new square footage would be for residential/campus life/athletics use only, and would allow the University to house an additional 385 students on-campus. Although the order approving the campus plan allows for the modification of the existing Leavey Center, which includes a hotel, into additional beds without the need to obtain further processing, the University instead chose to construct a new building and maintain the hotel within the Leavey Center as a hotel.

SPACE CATEGORIES	DISTRIBUTION OF NEW SQUARE FOOTAGE IN CAMPUS PLAN	PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF NEW SQUARE FOOTAGE
Academic/Administrative	164,500	164,500
Residential/Campus Life/Athletics	232,150	362,754 ¹
Medical/Health Care	541,436	541,436
Academic/Administrative/ Medical /Health Care	97,500	97,500
TOTAL	1,035,586	1,166,190

The addition of the Northeast Residence Hall would increase the FAR of the campus, but within the maximum 1.46 stipulated by the Campus Plan. This increase in space should have no effect on student and staff populations, but would allow the university to adapt the plan to accommodate more students on campus, improve campus life for its students and reduce its impact on the surrounding residential communities, including reducing the amount of noise within those residential communities.

Campus Plan Amendments and Further Processing

The subject application requests two campus plan amendments to allow for the construction of the Northeast Triangle Residence Hall and the re-designation of the Gervase and Mulledy buildings and Ryan Hall, and two further processing requests to construct a new residence hall and renovate three buildings.

¹ Includes space proposed to be designated for either academic/administrative or residential/campus life/ athletics for Gervase and Mulledy buildings and Ryan Hall and the proposed Northeast Residence Hall.

Northeast Triangle Residence Hall

The application requests a campus plan amendment to permit the Northeast Residence Hall, a 70,532 square-foot building not designated on the 2010-2017 Campus Plan, and further processing for the construction of that building. The building is proposed to be located on a triangularly-shaped site not currently developed or proposed for any use. At a height of 87 feet, two inches, the building would contain 70,532 square feet and consist of eight stories plus a basement.

Masonry in a variety of whites and grays would be used primarily on the ground floor, interspersed with glass curtain walls, but would extend up to the seventh floor on the southeast side of the building, where the building narrows. A more fine grained masonry façade and aluminum windows would be used for much of the remainder of the building, up to the roof. A green roof would be provided on a small portion of the structure above the seventh floor. The roof of the building would not be accessible to students.

Pedestrian access to the building would be on the southwest side, into the first floor of the building facing the Reiss Science Building and away from Georgetown Visitation. This floor would include the building's lobby, classrooms, a lounge, offices and storage for 42 bicycles. In addition to approximately 225 dorm beds configured in semi-suites centered on common bathrooms, the seven upper floors would include laundry facilities, study rooms and additional lounge space. Loading access to the building would be directly into the basement, and accessible from the Reiss Science Building to the southwest below-grade.

Gervase Building, Mulledy Building and Ryan Hall

Until 2003 these three buildings had been used as a residence for members of the Society of Jesus, when the use was transferred to a newly constructed building, Wolfington Hall. The current Campus Plan designates them for "academic/administrative use." Prior to 2000 these buildings had been designated for residential/campus life/athletic" use, consistent with their use as residence halls for the university's Jesuit Community. The applicant would now like to use Mulledy and Ryan as undergraduate residences and Gervase as either administrative office or a mixture of residential and administrative use, depending on how much space would be required to enable the University to house all 385 undergraduate students on campus. No construction is proposed, with the exception of bringing the buildings up to current building code. The applicant would be required to go before the Old Georgetown Board for any exterior modifications to those buildings.

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the campus plan amendments and further processings as proposed by the applicant.

ZONING REGULATIONS

Section 210 of the Zoning Regulations, Colleges and Universities, sets forth the criteria required for approval of university uses within residential zone districts.

- 210.1 *Use as a college or university that is an academic institution of higher learning, including a college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity, or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university, shall be permitted as a special exception in an R-1 District if approved by the Zoning Commission under § 3104, subject to the provisions of this section.*
- 210.2 *Use as a college or university shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.*

The proposed new residence hall and the conversion of the Gervase and Mulledy buildings and Ryan Hall to student housing would allow the university to house an additional 385 students on campus, and not within the surrounding neighborhood, reducing the number of students living off-campus and reducing the opportunity for objectionable conditions within the neighborhood. It would also enable the University to satisfy Condition No. 6 of the order approving the current campus plan.

The adjacent property to the east is Georgetown Visitation, a private girl's school, and the new residence hall would be adjacent and nearest to their cemetery and athletic fields, with the closest buildings approximately six hundred feet away.

- 210.3 *In R-1, R-2, R-3, R-4, R-5-A, and R-5-B Districts, the maximum bulk requirements normally applicable in the districts may be increased for specific buildings or structures; provided, that the total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus shall not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-B District. In all other Residence Districts, similar bulk increases may also be permitted; provided, that the total bulk of all buildings and structures on the campus shall not exceed the gross floor area prescribed for the R-5-D District. Because of permissive increases as applicable to normal bulk requirements in the low-density districts regulated by this title, it is the intent of this subsection to prevent unreasonable campus expansion into improved low-density districts.*

The subject application proposes to increase the FAR from 1.22 to 1.23, less than the maximum FAR of 1.8 permitted by the R-3 District for a campus, and less than the maximum of 1.45 approved in the Campus Plan.

- 210.4 *As a prerequisite to requesting a special exception for each college or university use, the applicant shall have submitted to the Commission for its approval a plan for developing the campus as a whole, showing the location, height, and bulk, where appropriate, of all present and proposed improvements, including but not limited to the following:*

- (a) Buildings and parking and loading facilities;*
- (b) Screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities;*
- (c) Athletic and other recreational facilities; and*

(d) A description of all activities conducted or to be conducted on the campus, and of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development.

The 2010-2017 Campus Plan, approved by the Zoning Commission on July 16, 2012 and effective October 10, 2012, does not include the proposed dormitory, and designates the Gervase, Mulledy and Ryan buildings for academic/administrative use.

The subject application proposes to amend this plan by adding the Northeast Residence Hall and designating the site for residential/campus life/athletic use, and designating the Gervase and Mulledy buildings and Ryan Hall for use as either academic/administrative or residential/campus life/athletic use. No additional parking is proposed. An underground passageway from the basement of the Northeast Residence Hall would provide access to the existing loading space within the Reiss Science Building, the adjacent building to the southwest.

The amendment would also permit the Northeast Residence Hall to be an eight-story 70,532 square-foot residence hall housing approximately 225 beds, and for the Gervase, Mulledy and Ryan buildings to be used to house approximately 160 students.

- 210.5 *Within a reasonable distance of the college or university campus, and subject to compliance with § 210.2, the Commission may also permit the interim use of land or improved property with any use that the Commission may determine is a proper college or university function.*

The subject application does not propose interim use of land located off-campus.

- 210.6 *When a major new building that has been proposed in a campus plan is instead moved off-campus, the previously designated site shall not be designated for, or devoted to, a different major new building unless the Commission has approved an amendment to the campus plan applicable to the site; provided, that for this purpose a major new building is defined as one specifically identified in the campus plan.*

No major new buildings are proposed to be moved off-campus as a result of this application.

- 210.7 *In reviewing and deciding a campus plan application or new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the Commission shall consider, to the extent they are relevant, the policies of the District Elements of the Comprehensive Plan.*

The proposal is consistent with the policies of the Comprehensive Plan, including the following:

“Policy EDU-3.3.2: Balancing University Growth and Neighborhood Needs
Encourage the growth and development of local colleges and universities in a manner that recognizes the role these institutions play in contributing to the

District's character, culture, economy, and is also consistent with and supports community improvement and neighborhood conservation objectives. Discourage university actions that would adversely affect the character or quality of life in surrounding residential areas.” (§ 1214.6)

“Policy EDU-3.3.4: Student Housing

Encourage the provision of on-campus student housing in order to reduce college and university impacts on the housing stock in adjacent neighborhoods.” (§ 1214.8)

“Policy NNW-1.1.8: Student Housing

Support and promote efforts by the area's universities to develop on campus dormitories in order to reduce pressure on housing in nearby neighborhoods.” (§ 2108.9)

Construction of a new dormitory building and the conversion of three existing buildings on campus to residential use would reduce the impact the university has on housing in nearby neighborhoods.

- 210.8 *As an integral part of the application requesting approval of new building construction pursuant to a campus plan, the college or university shall certify and document that the proposed building or amendment is within the floor area ratio (FAR) limit for the campus as a whole, based upon the computation included in the most recently approved campus plan and the FARs of any other buildings constructed or demolished since the campus plan was approved.*

The subject application contains documentation of the existing and proposed FARs for the campus as a whole. The proposed FAR is 1.23, less than the maximum 1.80 permitted by the R-3 zone district, and the 1.45 designated in the Campus Plan.

- 210.9 *Before taking final action on an application for use as a college or university, the Commission shall submit the application to the D.C. Office of Planning and the D.C. Department of Transportation for review and written reports.*

The subject application was referred to the Office of Planning and the Department of Transportation for review and written reports. The District Department of Transportation, in a memorandum dated November 15, 2013, indicated that it had no objections to the application.

Based on the analysis above, the Office of Planning concludes that the subject application is in conformance with the provisions of the § 210.

Variance Relief

The maximum building height permitted for institutional buildings is ninety feet, and the proposed building would be 87 feet, two inches in height, consistent with that requirement. A

minimum thirty-foot set back is required from an adjoining property, in this case, Georgetown Visitation, located to the east, with a one-to-one setback required for that portion of building height in excess of forty feet in height. The proposed residence hall would provide the minimum thirty-foot setback, but would not provide the required one-to-one setback required for the upper floors of the building. Therefore, variance relief is requested from § 400.9 to permit a campus building to not provide a one-to-one setback for that portion of the building in excess of forty feet in height.

The extraordinary or exceptional situation in this case is the need to locate the building in the general vicinity of other campus housing and services, in this case the north residential housing cluster. To the north of the proposed building is Henle Village, a series of residence halls, and to the west is Leavey Center, which provides residential services to those living on campus. Shifting the building to the west and away from the adjoining property would locate the proposed building too close to the adjacent building to the west, adversely affecting pedestrian flow between the buildings.

The practical difficulty is that the building must be designed of a certain size, in this case 225 beds, to make it economically feasible. Due to the shape and size of area of land available in close proximity to the other residence halls and services, the footprint of the building cannot be increased, with the result that the applicant's only option is to increase the height of the building. Reducing the height of the building would reduce the number of floors and reduce the number of beds within the building by thirty-five, which would impact the applicant's ability provide an additional 385 undergraduate beds on campus by the fall of 2015.

The requested variance would not substantially impair the purpose and integrity of the zone plan. Because the required setback is one-to-one for only that portion of the building in excess of forty feet in height, the variance is primarily only necessary for the top floor of the building, minimizing its impact on the adjoining property, Georgetown Visitation. The Georgetown University property is at a lower grade than the Georgetown Visitation property, minimizing the appearance of the proposed residence hall from the neighboring property. Further, the portion of Georgetown Visitation's property adjacent to the proposed structure is used for either a cemetery, athletic fields or wooded, further minimizing the impact of the building on adjacent property.

The Office of Planning recommends approval of the variance to the setback as requested by the applicant.

COMMUNITY COMMENTS

ANC 2E, at its regularly scheduled meeting of November 4, 2013, voted to support the application.

AGENCY COMMENTS

The District Department of Transportation, in a memorandum dated November 15, 2013, indicated that it does not object to the application.

The subject application is under concept review by the Old Georgetown Board.

RECOMMENDATION

The Office of Planning recommends **APPROVAL** of the application as submitted by the applicant.

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Location Map:

